

Cher Henri Jayer

the ultimate sale

letter

Dear Henri Mayer,

*First of all, I wanted to understand, analyse, explain...
This adoration, this amusing – and at times frightening –
veneration is something I have had the chance to observe
closely and have tried to interpret...*

How indeed can one define this perfect synergy between a “*climat*” and a man, this alchemy recognizable amongst all? No one truly knows the secret. But, if myths can help us elucidate the most arcane puzzles, then the “*Henri Mayer myth*” could probably offer an explanation that may meet our expectations.

I wanted to understand your vineyards by walking your land, from Vosne to the Richebourg, reaching the Cros-Parantoux, treading the stones that you dynamited more than 60 years ago. I contemplated these noble and robust vines that have found their corner of paradise.

I wanted to embrace your “*Domaine*” by examining the vat-room and the cellar, by caressing the press in an attempt to imagine its vibrations, by putting my nose to the vats as if to detect a reminiscence of berries. There I am, trying to comprehend the burden of the labour by under-weighting each tool, putting my ear to the barrels’ bellies to listen to their breath, imagining one last vintage we might dream of preparing in this august cellar...

I wanted to understand who you were by chatting with your daughters, Lydie and Dominique, in your living room which has remained intact for so many years, their stories and anecdotes kindling my desire to *get the picture* all the more. In your office, which has also remained unchanged, I ardently leafed through your precious diaries in which you scrupulously recorded your days in the vineyard with your wife Marcelle and your close team, ever since 1948.

I wanted to understand your wine by tasting it whenever I could, attempting to fathom the feelings and sensations you seek to make us experience – a fabulous journey to the pinnacle of pleasure.

I wanted to share remembrances with your nephew Emmanuel Rouget, whom you took under your wing in order to entrust him with the jewel that you created, one that he continues to enhance.

Now, I know it’s fruitless to attempt explaining the talent and the magic of the man – we just have to feel and peacefully enjoy to the full these masterpieces that you leave us as a legacy.

Hence, let us turn the final page of the most mythical Burgundian “*Domaine*” together. The lights have been turned off, the cellar is empty.

These vintages, these ultimate bottles, which you so carefully kept at the estate, are now awaiting us for a marvelous sale. May we share this unique moment and bring these treasures from the past back to life, as you would surely have wished, dear Henri Mayer, with all due respect.

Michael Ganne

backstage

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*The last bottles
from the personal reserve of*
Henri Mayer

On Sunday, the 17th of June 2018, 1064 bottles of wine from *Domaine Henri Mayer* will be auctioned in Geneva. The sale of the very last bottles originating directly from the wine-maker Henri Mayer's personal reserve, is indisputably a historical event in the world of leading wine collectors.

The 855 bottles and 209 magnums assembled for this sale represent all of the bottles that Henri Mayer had patiently gathered over the course of his life as an artisan winemaker in the cellars of his *Domaine* in Vosne-Romanée. These bottles and magnums composed his personal reserve, a selection that he himself had made of his greatest wines, sleeping treasures that had never left the cellar until now. While very few people outside the family were invited to enter the premises, the experts from Baghera/wines had exclusive access to the *Domaine*'s cellars, cellars in which all the wines were still stored just as Monsieur Mayer in person had left them 11 years ago – the arrangement of the bottles in the racks, the organization of the racks in the ageing cellar beneath the vat-room, the *Master*'s own notes on these red and green racks...

A few weeks later, in February this year, all the bottles were labelled and capsuled in the *Domaine*'s vat-room, by Emmanuel Rouget and Monsieur Mayer's daughters, in view of the sale.

Once the wines were loaded into the secured vehicle specially chartered for this operation, the bottles and magnums were escorted to the Geneva Freeport where they are currently being kept in perfect temperature and hygrometric conditions.

The unprecedented character of this collection has led us to enhance the wines' traceability process. Each of the bottles from Henri Mayer's personal reserve is fitted with the ProofTag™ protection system which enables the purchaser to identify and authenticate each wine acquired at this historic sale.

Finally, these extraordinary bottles are offered in original wooden cases engraved *Domaine Henri Mayer*, exclusively created for this exceptional sale.

Baghera/wines



mardi

31
St laure

octobre

Minima +1°: Maxima +6°

Brouillard toute la journée - Vent faible de S.O.

Nous avons lavé les boudes et rempli avant
9h. Ensuite nous avons fini de couper les
taillis aux Savières et nous en avons tiré
ensuite. Les femmes ont fini de nettoyer
les Cerneau Thomas et les Savières (Huni et Georges)

notes d'octobre

Clapigny	43 caisses
Pancey	28 caisses
Cernau Thomas	18 caisses
Cruets	$24 + 18 = 42$ caisses
Creux (Georges)	46 caisses
Creux (Lucien)	72 caisses
Beaumonts (Lucien)	13 caisses
Beaumonts	12 caisses
Petits Monts	7 caisses
Savières	36 caisses
Savières (Lucien)	17 caisses
Heurgers	$50 + 61 = 111$ caisses
Cros Parantoux	41 caisses
Baneaux	11 caisses
Cros Parantoux (Méo)	16 caisses
Baulés	53 caisses
Richembourg	31 caisses
Sous-la-Velle	38 caisses
Saules	17 caisses
Total	658 caisses

1978

Preserved in his unchanged office, Henri Mayer's *éphémérides* (agendas) are silent – yet eloquent – witnesses of the wine-maker's everyday life. Rigorous and methodical, Henri Mayer noted down, every single morning, what he had done the day before, in his succinct and economical fashion, but down to the last detail... In this way, he left the precious traces of his ongoing work as a legacy to indiscreet enthusiasts and lovers of his wines. The Baghera/wines team would like to thank the family for their trust.

Henri Mayer's personal agenda, 1978
© Courtesy of the family.

sensations

A day at Vosne-Romanée with Monsieur Mayer

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Life sometimes offers unique moments. The sale of the personal bottles from Henri Mayer's private cellar is one of them. Passionate about Burgundy wines and a professional of fine wine auctions for almost two decades, I am aware of how the sale on the 17th of June, 2018 is – and will remain – an event for all *Pinots Noirs* enthusiasts and admirers of the work accomplished by the “*Master*”.

This winter morning, at dawn, I arrive at the edge of the Côte de Nuits. After the village of Nuits-St-Georges, I drive through the sleeping Vosne-Romanée taking the *Rue du Monument*, then the *Rue de Bas* that leads to the church and its steeple in the mist. I turn right on *Rue de Grand-Velle* and finally reach the goal of the first lap of my trip: number 40, just after the turn, is the house and the cellar of Monsieur and Madame Mayer.

The second lap of my journey begins when we open the red wooden doors of the winery. In front of us, the well-aligned vats rest in silence in the freshness of the winter air and I am filled with an impression of immutability as soon as I take my first steps into the upper cellar. As with any gravity-flow cellar, the *Holy of holies* remains to be discovered: the ageing cellar on the lower level, several meters underground. A concrete staircase with chiselled treads takes us to the door of the sanctuary in just a few steps, which opens before me. In semi-darkness,

I discover the pillared room, the first cellar where half a dozen empty barrels still rest on a bed of gravel. A few more steps and I reach the second cellar where we discover – resting in an absolutely calm *chiaroscuro* – hundreds of magnums and bottles, perfectly laid out. These sleeping bottles coexist in silent harmony with several other witnesses and accomplices of Henri Mayer's work: barrels leaning against the North wall, the “*chèvre à deux becs*”, the “*ouilloir*”, the “*pipettes*”, the “*bondes*” and the “*maillet*”...

On this day, during which time seems suspended, we bring to light, one by one, these mythical bottles, reading out loud the names of the *Climats* and vintages as they appear before our eyes. Each flask, bottle or magnum, simply adorned with its label, vintage slip and capsule provokes an almost palpable emotion in each member of the Baghera team. And although our feet are treading the ancient soil of Vosne-Romanée, we have, at that moment and for a few hours, our heads in the stars.

I never had the privilege of meeting Monsieur Mayer, but I have had the immense pleasure of drinking his wines on several occasions. Acquiring bottles that the “*Master*” had personally chosen to keep in his private cellar is a tribute to the respect and dedication that the “*poet*” of Cros-Parantoux had for his *terroir*, for Nature and for one of its most noble expressions: the wines of Burgundy.

Julie Carpentier

treasures

1970 — 2001

ultimate bottles

— FROM HENRI JAYER'S PERSONAL RESERVE —

209  855  ^{MA}_{GNU}^{MS} ^{BO}_{TTL}^{ES}

469  Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru,
Cros-Parantoux *bottles & magnums*
1978 to 2001

9  Richebourg,
Grand Cru *bottles & magnums*
1973 to 1987

42  Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru,
Les Brulées *bottles & magnums*
1973 to 1987

187  Échézeaux,
Grand Cru *bottles & magnums*
1976 to 1999

etc.

Henri Jayer

auktion

17th of june 2018

— geneva —

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